

## **Muslim Perspective on Mercy**

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Islam is described in the Qur'an as a message of Mercy for the world. This truth can be demonstrated thoroughly in its teachings whether through the Qur'an or the Sunnah (way and example of the Prophet). Any person who studies Islam deeply comes to the conclusion that God's message is a **message of peace, security, prosperity, love, justice, and happiness for all of His creation**. All what a person needs for understanding Islam is humility, an open-mind, attention and an effort to learn about it from reliable sources and not from the media or extremist religious broadcasts and periodicals.

Islam stresses on the Universal values and can never contradict the human nature and common sense. By nature and with our natural disposition we understand what Mercy is all about. First and foremost, we are humans before any religious affiliation. Religion was only meant to remind us and teach us how we can be better human hence closer to God Almighty.

### **Muslim Perspective on Mercy:**

1. One of the most important names of God: **The Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate**. Every Muslim who prays the daily Salat prayers calls Him by these two names more than 68 times.
2. God revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S) to teach people that the first thing humanity should know about Him is that He is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful:

**[Tell My servants that I am indeed the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful;]**

(15:49)

3. God also says: **[My Mercy extends to all things...]** (7:156)
4. **[Say: "If ye had control of the Treasures of the Mercy of my Lord,**

**behold, ye would keep them back, for fear of spending them: for man is (ever) niggardly!"] (17:100)**

5. The entire divine message sent through Prophet Muhammad (S) is meant to focus on Mercy: **[We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures.] (21:107)**

The Qur'an teaches that Allah sealed the revelation to mankind through His last Prophet and Messenger Muhammad (P.b.u.h) whom He sent to all humanity as a Mercy. We read in the Qur'an,

**"We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures" (21:107)**

And He also says,

"Say: "O people! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: there is no god but He: it is He that gives both life and death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in Allah and His Words: follow him that (so) you may be guided." (7:158)

In many chapters of the Qur'an, Allah reminds people of the blessings and possessions they have because He is the one who gives and takes away things such as health, wealth, intellect and life. He uses in all these cases the word "Rahmah" which means Mercy, and He wants people to be merciful to one another as well as to all His creatures. The Prophet (S), who was the example and practical model of God's teachings urged people to be merciful and compassionate. He said,

**"Be merciful to others, Allah will be Merciful to you, and forgive, Allah will forgive you"** Related by Ahmad. And he also said when al-Aqra' Bin Haabiss, a

Bedouin man, saw him kissing his grand son al-Hassan and said that he had ten children and he never kissed anyone of them:

**“Whoever does not show mercy to others, Mercy won’t cover him”** Agreed upon it. Ahmad added: **“and whoever does not forgive, Allah won’t forgive him”** He also said,

**“The merciful ones deserve the Mercy of the Most Merciful. Be merciful to those on earth so that the One in Heaven – Allah – will cover you with His Mercy”** Reported by Ahmad, Abu Daawud and at-Tirmidhi. The latter said it is good authentic.

The Messenger of Allah (S) taught his followers that Islam is about mercy and being merciful. He explained and demonstrated that practically. Once He gave a parable to the mercy of God by pointing to a woman who was carrying her baby while breast-feeding him. He asked his companions, “Would you think this woman would throw her baby in the fire?” They replied, certainly not! She wouldn’t allow herself to do that. He then said, **“Know that Allah is more Merciful to you than this woman to her baby.”**

### **A model of Mercy**

In fact, there are hundreds of sayings that we can mention here in this context. All the teachings of the Prophet (S) were about how to be merciful and show the others the mercy of Islam. There are many stories mentioned in the biographies of the Messenger of Allah (S) of people who embraced Islam not because they studied it in the classes or heard about it in lectures, but rather because they saw the behavior of the teacher and his disciples. That behavior was one of the main reasons thousands of people embraced Islam and committed themselves to Peace. The Prophet Muhammad (S) proved to us that he was the

embodiment of the teachings of the Qur'an as his wife 'Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her) described him when she was asked by some people about his character. She said:

**“His character was the Qur'an. Don't you read Allah saying in the Qur'an, “And you indeed stand on an exalted standard of character”(68:4). Related in all the six books of Hadith and by Ahmad and others.**

The Prophet (S) with his pattern, character, and his personality was and still is considered by the faithful as a gift from God. That gift is a precious one because it is a Mercy. He (S) used to call his companions and say,

**“O people I am indeed a gift of mercy from Allah to you.”**

Once some of his followers, while suffering from the persecution and the injustice of the Polytheists of Makkah, asked him to curse them, he replied:

**“I was not sent by God to curse people, but rather as a Mercy to them.”**

Reported by Muslim

God described Prophet Muhammad (S) in the Qur'an mentioning some of his qualities. He says, God showed to His messenger one of the main reasons why people followed him. He said, **“It is part of the Mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them. Had you been severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when you take a decision, put your trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).”** (3:159)

One of the companions named Malek ibn al-Huwayrith came once with a group of youth from a different part of Arabia to learn about Islam and to stay as guests and students at the Prophet's place for many days. On the twentieth day, they told him that they missed their families and that they could not stay longer than what they had planned. He (S) understood their situation and gave them

permission to leave and instructed them briefly on what to do for prayers. Malek (r) said: **“He was very considerate of our situation, and indeed very kind, very compassionate, and very merciful...”**

I am mentioning this to show that if we Muslims are ordered by God to follow our Prophet (S) and to behave like him as much as we can then we should also be kind and merciful as he was. For those of us who love to follow his way, we are not a threat to anyone, but a mercy. Islam is crystal clear and does not allow its adherents to have double standards. We Muslims have one Book, one God, and one pattern to follow that is the pattern of the Prophets (Peace be upon all of them). Allah (swt) says regarding following the last Messenger (S), **“You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of Allah.”** (33:21)

And He also says:

**“Say: “This is my Way: I do invite unto Allah – on evidence clear as the seeing with one’s eyes – I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah! And never will I join gods with Allah!”** (12:108)

And He says regarding following all the Messengers (Peace be upon them), **“There was indeed in them an excellent example for you to follow, for those whose hope is in Allah and in the Last Day. But if any turn away, truly Allah is Free of all Wants, worthy of all Praise.”** (60:6)

**Mercy to the Enemy:**

**[And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan and the captive— (Saying) “We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks.]** (76:8-9)

And also when he reclaimed Makkah and rededicated it to Islam his enemies asked him about their destiny. He said what Joseph (P) said to his brethren: **“You may go free! No reproach this day shall be on you; may God forgive you.”**

### **Mercy to animals and all creatures:**

Prophet ﷺ as saying: *“A traveller who was thirsty saw a well in the way. He got inside the well and when he came out he saw a dog licking mud due to thirst. The man realised that the dog was as thirsty as him, so he got into the well again, filled his leather sock with water and carried it out holding it with his teeth. Thus, he quenched the thirst of the dog. Allah was pleased with this act of kindness and pardoned his sins.”* The Companions asked: “O Messenger of Allah, is there recompense in the matter of beasts and wild animals also?” The Prophet ﷺ replied: ***“There is recompense in regard to every creature that has a living heart.”***

'Abdullah bin 'Umar رضى الله عنه related that the Prophet ﷺ said: *“A woman was cast away to hell only because she had withheld food and water from her cat and refused to set it free so that the cat might satisfy its hunger by eating worms and insects.”*

Once on return from a military campaign, a few Companions took away the chicks of a bird from their nest to stroke them. The mother bird came back and when it could not find its chicks in the nest, it began to fly around screeching. When informed of the matter, Allah’s Messenger ﷺ became angry and ordered the chicks to be put back in the nest. [Abu Daawood]